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Introduction

1. In its resolution 1994/21 of 1 March 1994, the Commission on Human Rights, having considered the report of the Working Group on the Right to Development on its first session (E/CN.4/1994/21 and Corr.1), requested the Secretary-General to invite Governments, international financial institutions, the regional economic commissions, the relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to provide the Working Group with the necessary additional information, taking into account inter alia, the preliminary guidelines and the check-list contained in annex 1 to the report of the Working Group.

2. Pursuant to this request, the Secretary-General, on 26 April 1994, addressed a note verbale to Governments and a letter to United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations transmitting the text of Commission resolution 1994/21, as well as the guidelines and check-list prepared by the Working Group.

3. The present report is based on the additional information which was received from the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations by 20 September 1994:

(a) United Nations bodies: Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (22 June 1994), Division for the Advancement of Women (24 June 1994), United Nations Development Programme (26 May 1994), United Nations Environment Programme/Convention on Biological Diversity (15 June 1994), World Food Programme (30 June 1994), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (13 May 1994), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (13 May 1994), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (11 April 1994);

(b) Specialized agency: International Monetary Fund (6 July 1994);

Intergovernmental organizations: Commonwealth Secretariat (16 May 1994), European Commission (10 June 1994), League of Arabic States (13 June 1994).

4. The present report should be seen as complementary to the reports which were prepared on the basis of the information received from United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations by 31 March 1994, pursuant to an earlier request for information (see E/CN.4/AC.45/1994/2 and Add.1).

I. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM UNITED NATIONS BODIES

Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

5. Considering that the meaningful implementation of the "right to development" requires an array of analytical tools for monitoring and assessing the achievement of development objectives, it is generally recognized that reliable systems of statistical indicators of economic and social developments are indispensable, among other tools, for this purpose, as the Commission on Human Rights underlined in calling for the Seminar on Appropriate Indicators to Measure Achievements in the Progressive Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, held at Geneva on 25-29 January 1993. There are many such statistical indicators. However, the basic framework of economic statistics is provided by the System of National Accounts which has recently undergone a major revision resulting in the publication of the System of National Accounts 1993. This was the result of a cooperative effort by the Statistical Division of this Department, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Commission of the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In addition, the United Nations Handbook of Social Indicators (1989), produced by UNSTAT, reviews comprehensively the sources, methods and selection of indicators needed for measuring the achievement of social and economic development and welfare objectives.

Division for the Advancement of Women

6. The Division for the Advancement of Women drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General, under the priority theme, as established by Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, of "Development" on "Women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (E/CN.6/1994/3) which was submitted to the thirty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women held at United Nations Headquarters in March 1994.

7. In order to help prepare the theme, a seminar on urban women, organized by the Division was held from 22 to 25 November 1993 at Santo Domingo in order to focus on the issues and make policy recommendations to the Commission. Among its conclusions and recommendations were the following.

8. One of the most critical issues for women in cities is urban land tenure and property relations. Legislative reform which removes obstacles to women's access to land ownership and which protects women in terms of property is a vital first step in addressing gender imbalances in the city. To address this issue effectively, research is needed which freshly analyses legal and paralegal land markets, tenure relations, security of title, unregulated housing submarkets and rental markets in terms of gender relations in the city.

9. Housing policy and programmes need to recognize the particular constraints faced by women and women-headed households in gaining access to housing. These need to be addressed in terms of eligibility criteria, access to information, housing finance, transaction costs, location, design, and

construction arrangements and location. Resettlement and evictions should be avoided, since they particularly increase the vulnerability of women and children and because women bear the brunt of traumatized and dislocated communities.

10. Supply and improvement of residential infrastructure and services, such as water, sanitation, solid-waste management, electricity, transport and child care should be given high priority since they have considerable potential for improving family health and reducing women's domestic burden and caring responsibilities, increasing their time for other pursuits.

11. Poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, overcrowding, the absence of communal space and competition for scarce resources lead to domestic violence and social tensions in cities. Social conflicts affect women, men, boys and girls and the elderly differently. Violence in cities is related to domestic violence in households across all income groups, affecting women and children in particular.

12. Gender relations in the arena of urban politics are not yet well articulated. At a conceptual level, the notion of governance, which refers to relations between civil society and the State, offers a useful entry for thinking about gender relations in the city. Given the active engagement of women in urban-based struggles, the empowerment of women in civil society, politics and in State structures is a basic requisite for "good governance".

13. A holistic and integrated approach to urban development, involving partnership and participation of the public, private and community sectors, must involve both women and men at all stages of the development process, from identification through decision-making to implementation. Municipal governments have been unable on their own, and without genuine decentralization, to deliver urban services efficiently. In the absence of effective urban management and local government, non-governmental organizations, communities, and often women in communities have been organizing to service their own needs. This local action needs to be recognized.

14. Gender bias in urban labour markets begins with gender disparities in educational attainment and vocational training and labour market segmentation.

15. Rural women are an important link between rural and urban areas: they maintain food security and the general well-being of their families/households; they are capable of raising living standards through profitable use of remittances from urban workers. Therefore, improving rural women's status and control over resources should be considered as strategically important in efforts made at all levels towards fostering rural and urban development. Urban planners should be aware that rural/urban migration will continue to be an important component of urban growth.

16. Attention needs to be given to the identification of the differential impact of health risks to women and men in the urban setting and the workplace. Policies and programmes that will respond to gender-specific health care needs and minimize the health risks of urban women should be

developed and the scope broadened and expanded to include health issues beyond the historic priority given to women's reproductive health.

17. Access to nutritionally adequate and safe food is a right of each individual. National and local governments should enhance food and nutrition programmes to prevent food- and water-borne diseases and to ensure access to a nutritionally adequate food supply at the urban-household level, especially for urban poor, women, children, the elderly and new immigrants by:

(a) Adopting and strengthening comprehensive measures to ensure that food production, manufacturing and trade practices comply with the applicable requirements of quality and safety in order to protect consumers from unsafe, low-quality, adulterated, mislabelled or contaminated food;

(b) Improving urban women's knowledge of nutrition and thus their decisions in the selection, preparation and allocation of household food for the family. Particular attention must be paid to ensure equity in the allocation of food between girls and boys;

(c) Encouraging adult males and boys to take part in and take responsibility for the nutritional well-being and support of their partner(s) and offspring and to ensure household food allocation to women and children and elderly;

(d) Encouraging breast-feeding of infants and young children.

18. Population and reproductive health programmes should be placed in the broader context of primary health care services and should define reproductive choice as a basic right and a health issue which respects the dignity and privacy of women. They should improve the potential of success and sustainability of population and reproductive health programmes by integrating the perspectives of women as well as men into the development and implementation of population policies and programmes.

19. Copies of the full report can be made available to the Working Group, upon request.

United Nations Development Programme

20. The United Nations Development Programme drew the attention of the Working Group to the following information.

Part II

21. The consensus at the World Conference on Human Rights around the Declaration on the Right to Development is very significant, and enables intergovernmental organizations like UNDP to play a role in disseminating information about the Declaration, in particular the opportunities it provides for an integrated approach to development that links civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights. UNDP plans actively to disseminate information about the Declaration to its network of country offices, and to encourage debate around it. The Declaration provides an intergovernmental

consensus for the type of integrated approach UNDP is promoting under the rubric of Sustainable Human Development (SHD).

22. Although the Declaration itself has not been used in judging programmes and projects, several elements of it are used regularly. Since 1988, UNDP has increasingly been judging its activities by the extent to which they target the poor, advance women, sustain the environment and promote people's participation. UNDP staff are given training in all these areas and extensive manuals have been developed in some, including environment and gender.

23. UNDP has been reviewing ways to strengthen its service to the United Nations system, to enable it to become a unified and effective force in assisting countries to achieve and sustain human development, the integrated vision of development it is evolving in the concept of SHD. SHD was welcomed as an integrated approach at the recent meetings of Resident Representatives, which was addressed by the Secretary-General and some heads of programmes and agencies. Senior managers at the meeting carried the discussion of the SHD concept a stage further, and committed themselves to working towards it at the country level.

24. Several obstacles have been identified in UNDP's annual Human Development Reports: insufficient data on priority human concerns, the need to restructure national budgets to target priority human concerns, the need to review international opportunities for developing countries (which may receive $50 billion in aid but suffer $500 billion in lost trade and other opportunities); and the importance of people's participation at all levels. Moreover, a recent study of UNDP operational activities in order to refine and operationalize the concept of SHD found that the development community concentrated on physical, human and natural capital, but paid insufficient attention to social capital, that is the relations between people. It underlined the need for more attention to social capital through building coalitions and consensus behind development approaches.

25. The Declaration's role in strengthening the links between democracy, human rights and development is critical, given that there is now an intergovernmental consensus behind such an approach. The importance of these links has been recognized by Governments and development agencies, e.g. in governance programmes that link State modernization and reform to strengthening institutions of human rights. UNDP is supporting such programmes in response to country requests. The Declaration will enable the international community to move farther and faster in this regard.

Part III

26. The Right to Development has been raised in UNDP programmes since the mid-1980s, although not through the formal discussion or adoption of the Declaration. Particularly since the 5th programming cycle 1992-1996, UNDP target areas have included poverty and people's participation, management of development, the environment, women and technology. UNDP is commissioning a paper, in follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, to review the impact of its development activities on human rights. The conclusions and recommendations of this paper will enable the organization to further implement the right to development.

27. UNDP's 5th cycle has allocated substantial Special Programme Resources to the areas mentioned above, and country offices have worked with Governments on several national programmes in these areas. The evaluation of activities funded through SPR or through country IPFs will enable a much better understanding of using these entry points to achieve and sustain development. UNDP already has a substantial body of expertise that could be shared within the development community.

28. There are central units entrusted with furthering the implementation of the right to development within UNDP, which serve other UNDP units in this respect. They are currently located within the Programme Development and Support Division, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, and include: the Environment and Natural Resources Group, the Human Development Group (which includes officers on human development, poverty and people's participation, NGOs, women, human resource development), and the Management Development Group which includes programmes on governance.

29. In addition to the obstacles identified above, UNDP has identified the insufficient attention to people's participation in development, in terms of practical approaches and modalities. It is addressing this in several ways: through broadening dialogue with civil society organizations; through enabling NGO and other civil society organizations to participate in major international conferences (e.g. UNCED, the World Social Summit); through opening special funding windows for NGO/CSO participation in development, e.g. GEF Small Grants Programme, Partners in Development Programme, Africa 2000; through reflecting on the changes needed within UNDP itself to enable it to become more participatory internally and externally.

30. There is a need to further develop indicators to assess progress in achieving the right to development. UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) is a contribution to this process. The challenge still remains to evolve cross-sectoral indicators (e.g. the "greening" of HDI), as well as for other tools to assess the quality of progress. A great deal can be achieved in terms of building national consensus around development priorities, which is essential for progress but is harder to measure. Moreover, given that the right to development is an integrated approach to development, there is a need for methodologies on multidisciplinary, cross-cutting approaches to development, which UNDP will be working on as part of its contribution to developing the SHD concept.

31. UNDP informed the Working Group that it will continue to provide the Working Group with such information as is required to enable them to implement their mandate.

United Nations Environment Programme/Convention on Biological Diversity

32. The interim secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity pointed to the following elements which might be of interest to the United Nations Working Group on the Right to Development:

33. Preservation of biological diversity is an important element of the strategy of the international community for achieving sustainable development. The Convention on Biological Diversity, opened for signature during the

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, fully recognized this necessity.

34. The Convention on Biological Diversity has been signed by 156 States and ratified to date by 63 countries. Its objectives are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

35. The promotion of international, regional and global cooperation among States and intergovernmental organizations and the non-governmental sector is an important tool, under the Convention, for the achievement of such objectives. Therefore, concrete provisions of the Convention are devoted to financial resources, access to and transfer of technology to developing countries as well as technical and scientific cooperation including exchange of information and experience. To this end, a Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice has been established under the Convention to assist the Conference of the Parties in fulfilling its responsibilities.

36. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties will take place from 28 November to 9 December 1994. For the preparation of the meeting, an Intergovernmental Committee on the Convention on Biological Diversity has been created. Two sessions of the Committee were held, from 11 to 15 October 1993 in Geneva and from 20 June to 1 July 1994 in Nairobi. Concrete recommendations were addressed to the first session of the Conference of the Parties with a view to furthering the implementation of the objectives of the Convention.

37. Any new element in the implementation of the Convention in relation to the mandate of the Working Group will be brought to its attention.

World Food Programme

38. The connection between food aid and the right to development assumes greater clarity when the right to food is placed in its proper context as the most fundamental of all human rights, and a precondition to development. By providing food as relief during emergencies or as a resource in support of development activities, WFP promotes, in a concrete way, the achievement of the right to food and contributes towards laying the foundations on the basis of which the goals envisaged in the Declaration on the Right to Development can be achieved. The right to development is seriously in jeopardy whenever the right to food cannot be fulfilled.

39. In this regard the Bellagio Declaration on Overcoming Hunger in the 1990s has defined goals achievable by the year 2000 as:

(a) Elimination of deaths from famine;

(b) Ending hunger in half of the poorest households;

(c) Cutting in half malnutrition of mothers and children;

(d) Eradicating vitamin A and iodine deficiencies.

40. Against this background the main point at issue for WFP is how food aid can be used to accelerate development and self-reliance by removing the obstacles that prevent nations and peoples from exercising the right to development. Food aid is also viewed by WFP as contributing to human development since the rations provided, which are always directed to the poor, alleviate the serious effect of under-nourishment on human development.

41. Attainment of food security has emerged as a major objective in the context of structural adjustment programmes, particularly in Africa. Ensuring food security entails meeting two conditions: providing adequate food supplies through domestic production or imports; and helping poor households to acquire the food they need, either by growing it themselves or by enabling them to have the income to buy it. The World Bank, in its report "The Challenge of Hunger in Africa", estimates that about a quarter of Africa's population - more than 100 million people - do not consume enough food to allow an active working life. Many do not obtain enough energy from their diets to prevent serious health risks or stunted growth. Even more suffer in years when crops fail and food prices rise.

42. In any country, the food insecurity comprise different groups. Cost-effective programmes to improve food security must be tailored to the needs and circumstances of each group.

43. Attaining sustainable food security should not depend on food aid. On the other hand, food aid can be an effective resource in attaining sustainable food security. The programmes and projects that contribute to food security will vary from country to country depending on the causes of food insecurity. WFP has joined forces with the World Bank, FAO, and donor countries and aid agencies to conduct a series of pilot studies in selected African countries to design national food security programmes.

44. WFP supports some 150 agricultural and rural development projects. The way in which WFP food aid is used differs with the various types of agricultural and rural development projects.

45. Projects to increase agricultural production, including land clearing, forestry and land rehabilitation, account for more than half of WFP's development activities. In these projects, food aid is typically used either as food-for-work to fund labour-intensive activities, or as an incentive to encourage participation by local farmers or communities in the project activities or to compensate them for the time they invest in the project.

46. A major problem in rural areas is the lack of physical infrastructure, such as roads to transport goods to market, water systems for personal use and agricultural production, and community facilities such as schools, health-care centres and social centres. Food aid can help construct these facilities through food-for-work schemes.

47. Land settlement projects, in which large numbers of farm families bring new land into production, account for almost 5 per cent of WFP's development activities. Food assistance tides settlers over the initial settlement period until at least the first harvest, or self-sufficiency in food production, is

reached. Food aid is also used as food-for-work to construct agricultural infrastructure, public amenities and civil works.

48. Support to national food reserves, to national market restructuring or to national price stabilization activities form a small but important part of WFP assistance for development. In the case of food reserves, the objective is to improve the country's capacity to cope with bad harvests or natural disasters by ensuring a security stock of staple foods for distribution at such times.

49. In market restructuring or price stabilization projects, food aid is made available to Governments for distribution, usually sale, when food prices are high. The proceeds normally are used to purchase local products at guaranteed prices after harvest in order to replenish the reserve. Such projects help prevent excessive price fluctuations of staple foods, which, if unchecked, could discourage local production (through producer prices falling too low immediately after harvest) or cause excessive hardship to consumers (because retail prices rise to high levels immediately prior to harvest).

50. More and more the key role of population quality as a vital determinant in economic growth has been recognized. Nowhere is this more evident than in agriculture, where it is clear that the quality of land is not the determinant of whether the tiller of the soil is poor or not. Far more important than the quality of the land is the skill of the farmer and his knowledge about how to obtain the most productive return.

51. WFP-assistant human resource development projects consist primarily of feeding vulnerable groups (mothers, infants, pre-school children) and support for education (primary and secondary schools) and training. WFP currently assists some 90 human resource development projects with an aggregate value of more than $1.1 billion, mainly projects for mothers and pre-school and primary school children.

52. Obviously the effectiveness of WFP food aid for health and education depends crucially on the recipient country's efforts to improve basic services in these areas. The commitment of Governments and the seriousness of their efforts is thus a major factor in determining whether to begin or continue WFP support for human resource development programmes.

53. While feeding programmes of this type are necessarily a form of current consumption, they are also an investment whose benefits, though not easy to measure, are nevertheless real and, indeed, vital in the long-term for sustained economic growth.

54. In vulnerable group feeding projects, the food aid commodities provide a dietary supplement or (more rarely) a nutrition supplement and encourage greater and more regular attendance at mother and child health centres. The food aid constitutes a transfer of income to households or individuals (because the food is in addition to existing income sources of the household or individual). The food aid may also provide budgetary support to the Government, allowing it to expand social programmes, including vulnerable group health and nutrition programmes.

55. More than a fifth of WFP-supported ongoing developing projects, with assistance valued at some $640 million, supports education, mostly at the primary school level. In school-feeding projects, WFP food is used as an incentive to encourage regular attendance by pupils and as a dietary and income supplement to the family (which helps compensate for loss of the child's labour while attending school). It alleviates short-term hunger, thus improving children's learning ability. Sometimes WFP food also saves money in government budgets previously spent on school feeding programmes, which can be used for additional investment in education.

56. Women play pivotal roles both in production and consumption in developing countries. Yet, for historical and cultural reasons, their access to the factors of production and to economic and social services has often been severely limited. While money wages are often controlled by male household members, wages in food are generally handled by women, who have a high propensity to use it for the benefit of all household members. Access to this resource also helps women increase their productivity and their role in decision-making in the household and local community.

57. WFP's experience in this field points to some major lessons. First, support of "women only" projects has generally not been productive or sustainable as they had served to separate women from the mainstream of economic and social activity. Second, to dichotomize women's work into productive and reproductive roles has often been to their detriment. In reality, there is a continuum in the women's roles and responsibilities and to separate them has often led to increasing women's workload.

58. One of the major forms of WFP assistance is the creation of employment opportunities during the slack agricultural seasons in community self-help or public works schemes. Women in WFP-assisted food-for-work schemes represent, on average, between one third to one half of the labour force.

59. Apart from these seasonal employment schemes, WFP also is increasingly using food aid in non-formal and formal vocational training programmes that establish a direct link between the skills imparted and labour market requirements.

60. To say that the problems of hunger, poverty and underdevelopment that face developing countries are essentially structural is not to suggest any lessening in the immediate humanitarian efforts needed to meet urgent needs for food, debt relief and increased net capital and technological transfers. But it is necessary to ensure that ways are found to meet those needs without making the underlying situation worse. On the contrary, short-term measures should increasingly be tailored towards re-enforcing long-term solutions. WFP's experience demonstrates that food aid used properly can contribute substantially to increasing food production, which is a vital necessity for promoting self-reliance and, ultimately, the right to development.

61. From WFP's experience there are a number of important lessons if poverty and hunger are to be overcome and people's right to development assured. The most important may be briefly summarized:

(a) An appropriate overall economic policy framework and a commitment by Governments in developing countries to policies that explicitly address the problems of poverty, hunger and the right to development are essential;

(b) Resources are required on a much greater scale if poverty and hunger are to be eradicated speedily and sustainably. Not only will greater resource transfers be required, but a redirection of current resources - internal and external - also will be necessary;

(c) As the causes of poverty and hunger are multifarious, so too should be the measures taken for their eradication. There is no single solution - and there are no quick fixes;

(d) While increasing food production on a sustainable basis is an important, even daunting, requirement, it alone will not solve the problem of hunger and the right to food. The world food production problem is not synonymous with the world hunger problem. Ensuring access, or "entitlement", to food by the poor is vitally necessary. That can best be assured on a sustained basis by increasing their productivity, employment, incomes and assets, and hence their purchasing power. It also implies that in combating hunger, the necessary policies and programmes must extend beyond the food and agricultural sector;

(e) The poor and hungry are not a homogeneous group. There are important differences between, for example, small subsistence farmers, pastoralists, the landless and the urban poor, that affect the causes of their hunger and the coping strategies they can use to combat hunger. The poor have been skilled at devising strategies that make the best use of limited resources and opportunities to reduce their vulnerability to hunger. Resources should, therefore, build on, or reinforce, those strategies;

(f) Women play pivotal roles in food security both as producers and as key decision-makers in food consumption. Those roles should be fully recognized and supported;

(g) The pursuit of increased production and productivity must be on an environmentally sustainable basis, treating the earth now in such a way that it can meet the needs of future generations.

62. Finally, in WFP's view, any constructive measures aimed at promoting the right to development should take into account the following essential points:

(a) The right to development should be pursued from the point of view of the human person as the central subject of development. In this connection, increasing attention should be paid to promoting human resources development as the bedrock of true self-reliance;

(b) Governments should play the lead role in these efforts with the United Nations and other donor countries and organizations playing a facilitating or catalytic role;

(c) The right to development and the right to food are inextricably linked and therefore efforts to remove obstacles in the way of the latter

should be consciously integrated into broader programmes and activities to promote the former;

(d) Efforts to promote effective implementation of both the procedural and substantive aspects of the Declaration must go beyond the dissemination of information and educational and research activities.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

63. ECLAC transmitted the document "The Social Summit: A View from Latin America and the Caribbean: note by the secretariat" prepared in January 1994. This document formed the basis for the paper presented by ECLAC to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development (E/CN.4/AC.45/1994/2).

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

64. ESCAP implements a wide-ranging programme of activities for economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, all of which conform broadly to the decisions contained in the Declaration on the Right to Development. Of particular relevance is the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond (ST/ESCAP/1124, 1992). This strategy was annexed to the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond adopted by acclamation by the Fourth Asian and Pacific Conference of Ministers of Social Welfare and Social Development, held at Manila from 7 to 11 October 1991. The Report of the Conference and other pertinent materials have been published by ESCAP under the title, Proceedings of the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development (ST/ESCAP/1070).

65. The background to the preparation of this strategy is described in the following paragraphs.

66. In its adoption of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000), under resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly noted that the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the previous decade had for the most part not been attained. The General Assembly cautioned that in the absence of major policy changes, the coming decade would be much like the previous one. It also pointed out that among the major policy changes that were required were those dealing directly with social issues, which had been largely ignored in the rush to accelerate economic growth during the previous International Development Decades.

67. Concurrently with the General Assembly's deliberations on the formulation of an international development strategy for the 1990s, and in conformity with the rising international awareness that social issues had for too long been ignored, the Commission at its forty-fifth session in 1989 adopted resolution 45/1 of 5 April 1989 on a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond. In that resolution the Commission noted with great concern the critical social situation in many countries of the region, most clearly characterized by the persistence of mass poverty and widespread deprivation among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society.

It referred to the eradication of poverty, pursuit of distributive justice, and enhancement of popular participation as central issues to be addressed by all development efforts in the region.

68. The Commission also decided to convene the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development at Manila in 1991 to consider and adopt a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond. It requested the Executive Secretary to submit the regional social development strategy adopted at the Ministerial Conference to the Commission at its forty-eighth session in 1992.

69. In execution of those directives, the secretariat undertook a major project to formulate a regional social development strategy. The project recognized the critical social problems associated with a narrow focus on economic growth as the key to overall development. It noted that lack of adequate attention to the social dimension of development in the race to increase gross domestic product had caused large sections of society to be bypassed or marginalized in the development process. It felt that such a continued emphasis on economic growth would result in the intensification and proliferation of social problems throughout the region.

70. The project reflected the Commission's acute perception that development in Asia and the Pacific should be pursued intersectorally rather than sectorally and that it should give full consideration to the interrelations between the social and economic dimensions of the development process. The results of the project, it was expected, should be reflected in a heightened sensitivity among Governments and the citizenry at large that an integrated approach to planned development, incorporating both economic and social concerns, would facilitate the region's efforts to raise the quality of life of all its people, and that it would thus lead to suitably adapted national policy and planning approaches modelled upon a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond.

71. The project was designed to be carried out in three phases. In the first phase, emerging socio-economic patterns and the state of social development policy and planning in the region were appraised in a series of baseline studies on current socio-economic situations, major socio-economic trends and prevailing development policy and planning approaches, focusing on the themes of distributive justice, poverty eradication and popular participation. This resulted in the publication of two ESCAP studies: Major Issues Relating to a Regional Social Development Strategy for Asia and the Pacific: A Conceptual Framework (ST/ESCAP/902), and Comparative Country Studies on Social Development Situations, Trends and Policies, volumes 1 and 2 (ST/ESCAP/907).

72. The second phase of the project was devoted to the preparation of a series of alternative policy and planning scenarios for integrated socio-economic development in the region for the 1990s. Those scenarios explored, with respect to specific social issues, the possible policies and programmes that could be devised to serve, simultaneously, economic growth objectives and the social goals of distributive justice, poverty eradication and popular participation.

73. In its third phase, the project featured the formulation of a draft regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond, based on the results of the foregoing work.

74. ESCAP will convene a regional ministerial conference in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development at Manila in October 1994. It is expected that that Conference will adopt a regional Social Development Agenda for the ESCAP Region into the Twenty-first Century. That Agenda will also contain a number of decisions conforming to the Declaration on the Right to Development.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

75. The mandate of UNHCR is to provide international protection to refugees and to find durable solutions to their problems. Central to the work of the High Commissioner for Refugees is to protect the institution of asylum, that is, the ability of persons to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in another country. Additionally, however, and as part of the need to find solutions to the worldwide refugee problem, strong measures in countries of origin must be taken in order to prevent and resolve refugee flows. These measures include preventing the conditions which force people to leave their country of origin. In this sense prevention includes a range of activities by the international community in the promotion of human rights, early warning, and granting protection and assistance to the internally displaced.

76. The obstacles to realizing the right to development presented by movements of large numbers of persons, whether they be refugees, migrants or the internally displaced, is a subject which may be of interest to the Working Group on the Right to Development.

77. It should be recognized that it is often disregard for human rights which produces refugees and which, in consequence, has a significant impact on the development of the country of origin through the loss of human resources, skills, and breakdown of family and cultural ties. It should also be recognized that refugees in countries of asylum often face great obstacles, including legal barriers, in pursuing opportunities for education and employment. This undermines the human resources potential of the refugee population in the asylum country, as well as in the country of origin when they are able to repatriate voluntarily.

78. Moreover, as concerns voluntary repatriation, which is the preferred solution for the vast majority of refugees, UNHCR's role is to provide returning refugees with protection and assistance aimed at their reintegration in society. However, the success of voluntary repatriation often depends in large part on overcoming obstacles to the right to development in the refugees' country of origin. In this regard it should be further noted that many refugees are returning to countries whose economic structures have been undermined, if not destroyed, by armed conflict. An examination of obstacles to achieving the right to development in situations of post-conflict peace building may be a topic which the Working Group wishes to pursue.

79. UNHCR will continue to follow the activities of the Working Group on the Right to Development with great interest.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

International Monetary Fund

80. The IMF advised the Working Group that it had no additional information to provide concerning its activities as they relate to the right to development over and above the statements of its representative to the Working Group on the Right to Development.

III. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Commonwealth Secretariat

81. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that it had circulated the request for information to its various divisions and will be submitting the relevant information in due course.

European Commission

82. The Commission submitted its annual report on the implementation in 1993 of the European Community's resolution on human rights, democracy and development, adopted by the Council and the member States meeting in the Council in November 1991. The report describes the positive actions supported by the Commission to help the developing countries and the measures taken by the European Union and its member States in the event of serious infringements of human rights and/or the breakdown of democratic processes. Priority areas in doing so include the following: (i) operations linked with the exercise of public authority and following the lines of strengthening the rule of law and supporting consultation of the population, especially in countries making the transition to democracy; (ii) operations to strengthen civil society, including support for local associations and their membership, freedom of the press and strengthening of education schemes; (iii) support for vulnerable groups. Community financing was provided for 143 operations totalling ECU 39.2 million.

83. The complete report will be made available to members of the Working Group on request.

League of Arab States

84. Having studied Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/21 on the right to development, as well as the Declaration on the Right to Development, the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the report of the Working Group on the Right to Development and the questions raised by the Working Group on the Right to Development, we find that the right to development is one of the most important issues in our present-day world since it reflects the extent of the advancement and progress of peoples although some, if not most, States are still facing numerous difficulties of various types in their development programmes. Some of these difficulties relate to economic aspects while others concern political, cultural or environmental aspects in those States.

85. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Right to Development in its resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986 in order to reaffirm that "the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development". Since that time, the enjoyment of this right has become an increasingly important concept.

86. In this regard, we must commend the positive and important steps that the Commission on Human Rights is taking, through the competent Working Group, to give effect to this right, as well as the measures that it has taken to promote and strengthen the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development. In its report, the Working Group classified the obstacles in four categories with a view to making the Group's mandate strong and effective in order to produce recommendations that could be applied. However, it reached the conclusion that enjoyment of the right to development was being impeded, to a large extent, by the unsatisfactory application of institutional mechanisms at the governmental level and in the numerous institutions and programmes within the United Nations system. Moreover, international forums had reached the conclusion that the lack of communication between specialists in the fields of human rights and social and economic development within the Secretariat of the United Nations and in United Nations missions, national Governments, academic circles and non-governmental organizations was impeding the achievement of a full understanding of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the manner in which it should be implemented. This confirms that the Working Group on that right has succeeded in identifying the obstacles and determining aspects that can impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development in such a way as to formulate recommendations that can be put into effect by the international community. This means that the Working Group has taken into account the urgent appeal made by the World Conference on Human Rights in paragraph 72 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which urged the Working Group, in consultation and cooperation with other organs and agencies of the United Nations system, to promptly formulate comprehensive and effective measures to eliminate obstacles to the implementation and realization of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

87. With regard to the questions raised by the United Nations Working Group on the Right to Development concerning dialogue with Governments and international organs and their contributions in connection with the potential role and function of the right to development in development policies and programmes, and also with regard to the question concerning governmental organizations (section II on development cooperation), it can be said that the right to development, as stated in the Declaration on the Right to Development, plays an important role in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects for development cooperation, as indicated in the new agreement reached by the international community at the World Conference on Human Rights. In the Secretary-General's report, the proposals submitted concerning the practical implementation and promotion of the Declaration on the Right to Development contained a paragraph on a coordinating focal point in the Centre for Human Rights which recommended that a coordinating focal point should be established within the Centre for Human Rights to deal with all questions relating to human rights, development and democracy with a view

to coordinating with other United Nations departments, bodies and specialized agencies directly concerned with the right to development in order to closely examine the developments taking place in those institutions, provide a forum capable of formulating a coordinated plan of action for human rights and constitute a coordinating focal point for the Commission's work in the event of the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the Declaration on the Right to Development.

88. In our view, the implementation and follow-up of programmes and projects for development cooperation necessitate planning and coordination, as already indicated, between the various organs of the United Nations in order to give full effect to this right. This can be achieved only through the formulation of programmes by the United Nations and its relevant organs with a view to eliminating the obstacles that are impeding the realization of this right and which are unquestionably posing many complicated problems since they relate to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the internal or international situation of States.

89. The obstacles encountered in this regard consist in the lack of adequate coordination between the United Nations, its various organs and the States concerned since, in this regard, all States must cooperate in order to ensure the operation of a mechanism to monitor and implement the Declaration on the Right to Development, bearing in mind the need for coordination and solidarity with the United Nations through facilitation of the elimination of internal obstacles or through adoption of the recommendations of the Working Group on this right, which will undoubtedly be highly instrumental in making every State aware of the obstacles impeding the realization of this vitally important right of our peoples. This confirms that the strengthening of links between democracy, human rights and development in the manner proposed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action will strengthen the role of the Declaration, section I, paragraph 10, of which describes the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. The World Conference sought to promote this concept by emphasizing the need for the international community to support the least-developed countries that are committed to the process of establishing democracy and achieving economic development, since democracy, human rights and development are closely interlinked and none of them can be achieved independently of the others. The achievement of democracy requires respect for human rights, since violations of human rights have an adverse impact on democracy and development cannot proceed and flourish without respect for the human rights that are guaranteed in constitutions and local laws. In other words, democracy must be applied. The Declaration on the Right to Development emphasizes the need to promote these three principles and the World Conference on Human Rights, in turn, stressed this concept in the manner proposed and agreed upon by States in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.